

percent drop in the cancer death rate since 1991.

Thirty years ago, HIV was a death sentence, but because of NIH research, that is no longer the case.

And because of NIH funding, we are also on the verge of curing—yes, curing—sickle cell anemia, an inherited blood disorder that primarily affects African Americans.

Consider this: NIH funding contributed to research associated with every new drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration from 2010 to 2019.

Let me repeat that for emphasis. There are only two countries in the world that allow general advertising of prescription drugs—the United States and New Zealand. You can't turn on the television without hearing the story of a new drug. Every single drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration from 2010 to 2019 started off with government-funded, taxpayer-funded research at the National Institutes of Health.

So when you see these wonderful drugs, understand we, as Americans, put down the initial investment that made these drugs all possible.

However, there is a real threat to our Nation's investment in medical research. The new House Republican majority, after more than a dozen—in fact, 15—painful and embarrassing failed votes to secure the Speaker, announced that Speaker McCarthy had finally won the day, he made some deals, agreements with MAGA Republicans for that to happen.

One of those agreements would literally devastate funding for medical research in the future. What a price to pay.

He reportedly agreed to hamstringing government funding for 2024 at 2022 levels—a senseless move—senseless move—that would cut funding for scientific breakthroughs by roughly 7 percent and delay the delivery of new cures and treatments for those most in need.

So I would like to know, for the record, which diseases and conditions would Speaker McCarthy and the House Republicans like us to slash funding for? Cancer? Alzheimer's? Parkinson's? Diabetes? ALS? Heart disease? Which one?

Speak up, Mr. Speaker. This is supposed to be a new transparent House of Representatives. If you are going to cut funding in medical research, what can we put on the back of the burner, and how can we explain that to the families across America?

Now is not the time for political horse-trading that puts one person in power at the expense of everyone waiting for a cure.

We need to build on the bipartisan success which we have had to date and we have achieved over the past decade and continue to prioritize medical research funding that creates jobs but, most importantly, saves lives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### SOUTHERN BORDER

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I came to the floor to talk about the border one more time, but I was intrigued by the rhetorical questions my friend from Illinois has asked the Speaker.

I have got a question for President Biden: When you say that you are not going to negotiate on the debt ceiling, does that mean that the Federal Government is going to continue to rack up more and more debt on top of the \$30 trillion that we already owe, particularly during inflationary times when interest rates on that debt basically are eating up more and more of our discretionary budget?

To me, if the answer is yes, I am going to refuse to negotiate as we continue to rack up more and more debt, about two-thirds of which is on autopilot, as the Presiding Officer knows—it is mandatory spending. That is a supremely irresponsible position to take.

President Biden, when he was in the Senate, was known as a dealmaker, and as I said yesterday, during 2011, he negotiated with Senator McConnell the Budget Control Act, which was probably the most recent response, sort of a mixed bag as it was, to try to control Federal spending. It was a noble effort, although it did not succeed.

So I know our friends on the Democratic side would like to sort of add to Mr. McCarthy's challenges. We have got 6 months, perhaps, between now and the time the extraordinary measures the Treasury Department is going to be using to make sure we don't actually breach that debt limit, but I would suggest that the time would be better used, rather than sort of to add gasoline to the fire, to actually try to solve the problem. And the problem—the debt limit—is real. It needs to be addressed by two people: Speaker McCarthy and the President of the United States. Because anything the Senate were to pass with 60 votes, which would be required, would certainly be dead on arrival in the House of Representatives.

And so as a practical matter, while we are going to be very interested and engaged in the debate and discussion, that is where the decision is going to have to be made sometime between now and the time extraordinary measures are exhausted, perhaps as early as June.

But in the meantime, for the President of the United States, who represents not just Democrats, who represents all Americans—all 330 million-plus of us—to say: I am not negotiating, even though he has got a track record as a Senator and as a Vice President of negotiating hard things like this, to me, is an irresponsible answer, and I hope he will reconsider.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Now, Mr. President, to talk about what I came here to talk about—talk about the border.

I live in a border State. We have 1,200 miles of border with Mexico. We have, as a country, 2,000 miles of border with Mexico. And we are seeing numbers of people showing up at the border that we have never seen before—millions of people since President Biden was sworn in as President on January 20, 2021, millions of people showing up, many of whom are claiming asylum and seeking to immigrate permanently into the United States under the asylum laws. Because the administration has a policy of releasing those individuals into the interior of the United States to await a future immigration court hearing, which may be years in the future because of backlog, many of those individuals do not show up at their immigration court hearing but simply are willing to play the odds that they can just melt into the Great American heartland and not be returned or repatriated to their country of origin or actually have to appear at an asylum hearing.

We know that, statistically, the number of people who actually do show up for an asylum hearing in front of an immigration judge, only roughly 90 percent of them fail to meet the very stringent requirement for asylum, which is basically a credible fear of persecution based on some classification: race, sex, ethnic origin, or the like. That is a very narrow test, and it certainly does not include fear of poverty or even violence in your home country. Yet the policy of the Biden administration to basically create open borders and place individuals who show up and claim asylum—these are not people trying to run away from the Border Patrol, by the way. These are people who are turning themselves in because they know they can play the system, and they will be able to make their way into the United States without any consequences—certainly, no legal consequences.

I am sure those of my colleagues who have visited the border—and we had a bipartisan group just a couple weeks ago who did visit again both Yuma, AZ, and El Paso. But as my colleagues can attest, there is no data, there is no image there, frankly, or no words to adequately convey the complexity of what is happening at the border today. To understand, you have to see and hear for yourself.

Several years ago, I traveled to Brooks County, which is a little county in South Texas, where I visited a ranch that the Border Patrol had a rescue beacon in the middle of.

And just to explain, the Border Patrol does a lot of humanitarian rescues because, as you can imagine, people coming from Central America, up across the land bridge into Mexico, up to the United States, many of them show up dehydrated, suffering from exposure, and some of them, frankly, die on the trip. But the Border Patrol, while they have the responsibility of enforcing our immigration laws at the border and interdicting illegal drugs,

they also rescue migrants who are in distress. And what these rescue beacons are, out in the middle of nowhere, frankly—what they are are large poles with a light on top that allows migrants who are sick, injured, or otherwise in distress to contact law enforcement for help and immediately get access to first aid, water, food, whatever they need. There is a sign at the bottom of these rescue beacons that instructs the migrants to press a red button for help and to remain in the area.

Well, when I first went to Brooks County, which is where this—Falfurrias is probably the largest inland port where the Border Patrol has a checkpoint in Brooks County. I was surprised to see the rescue beacons not written in just English, not just written in Spanish but in Mandarin. Mandarin. This is Brooks County, TX, a rural county 70 or so miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, and the rescue beacon is in Chinese, the Chinese language. This is a factoid about the border crisis that doesn't get nearly the attention that it deserves. What this tells me and what I have learned subsequently is that migrants aren't just coming from Mexico. They are not just coming from Central America. They are literally coming from all around the world.

Now, when I hear, for example, Vice President HARRIS or the President of the United States or Secretary of State Blinken talk about the migration crisis, they want to talk about root causes. And I think, although that is a little bit vague, I think what they are talking about is they view migration as an economic crisis: people living in their home country who are seeking a better life, which we all certainly understand, or fleeing violence—they want to talk about root causes.

But I think what they don't understand or certainly aren't articulating is the fact that this is far broader than a regional problem concentrated in Mexico and Central America. I think the fact that these rescue beacons have been, for many years, written in English, Spanish, and Mandarin is evidence of the fact that this is a far larger problem but one that the administration has simply not acknowledged.

A couple of weeks ago, I traveled with a bipartisan delegation of colleagues to El Paso, TX, which is the westernmost point in my State. Actually, just a bit of trivia, the city of El Paso is closer to the Pacific Ocean than it is to the eastern tip of Texas, to give you an idea of the scope of what we are talking about. It is a big place.

But we traveled to El Paso, TX, which is an urban area, but we also went to Yuma, AZ, which, if you look on the map, is the southwestern portion of Arizona, another border State, just right up against California. But it is an agricultural community. I think it is fair to say—I am not disparaging it—it is kind of a sleepy little agricultural town.

We met a number of people in El Paso and Yuma whom I want to men-

tion. In El Paso, we went out on a night patrol with the Border Patrol. They got on their horses, and they rode over this large area where there is a lot of traffic. And then we were informed that they had detained two migrants. And so we walked over there to sort of see what was going on, and the Border Patrol said: Well, these two are from China. El Paso, TX, two Chinese migrants trying to make their way across the border. As a matter of fact, one of the Border Patrol Agents had to use an app on the phone, I think it is called Google Translate, in order to communicate with these migrants.

Then, when we went to one of the detention facilities or processing facilities, actually—not actually detention—we met a family from Uzbekistan while touring the Border Patrol Central Processing Center in El Paso—not in Mexico, not Central America, but Uzbekistan. You can look that up on the map. It is not a part of the region that the President, the Secretary of State, and Vice President are talking about when they are talking about root causes of illegal immigration.

But when we went to Yuma, the little sleepy agricultural town on the border of Mexico and the United States, the Acting Border Patrol Chief told us that one of the unusual features of a number of the migrants who came across Yuma were they came from 176 different countries, and they spoke more than 200 languages.

And you might ask: How in the world is that possible? Well, Senator KELLY, one of the Arizona Senators, said: Well, there is an airport right across the border in Mexico, at the northern border, in a city called Mexicali. Again, if you look at your map of Mexico, you will see that Mexicali is a pretty large urban area right there on the Arizona border. And people fly into there. Of course, they have to pay human smugglers, criminal organizations that are a network that smuggle human beings for money from anywhere in the world to that airport, and then they walk across or walk up to the Yuma Border Patrol and claim asylum.

They noted that many of them are apparently well-to-do. Somebody mentioned Gucci luggage. I don't know whether Gucci makes luggage or not, but you get the idea. These are the not the sort of mental pictures that I think many people have of migrants who are seeking a better life, necessarily, fleeing poverty, I should say, or fleeing violence.

So the reason I mention this is because the reality of what is happening on the ground along the border undercuts the rhetoric we hear from the administration about how to solve this problem.

The White House has pushed a narrative that the only way to fix the border crisis is to fix the “root causes” of migration, meaning the economic and security concerns that cause people to come here. It has honed in on the Northern Triangle, including El Sal-

vador, Guatemala, and Honduras, as the primary region of concern.

The administration's border czar, Vice President HARRIS, even led the development of the “root causes strategy.” The problem is the data shows that this is not the region driving illegal migration.

Last month, Customs and Border Protection encountered more than a quarter of a million migrants at the southern border. Fewer than 33,000 of those 250,000 were from Northern Triangle countries—33,000 out of the 250,000 were from Northern Triangle countries. So these are the three countries that the administration is focused on.

It reminds me of the story of people who look through a soda straw at a problem. Well, they can look down the soda straw, and they can see what is happening there, but they don't see what is happening around it, and they lose any sense of context or the complete picture. That is what the administration is doing when they are looking at the border and the humanitarian and national security crisis occurring there on a daily basis and in my State's backyard.

As a matter of fact, these three countries represent only about 13 percent of the migrants encountered at the southern border in December. Mexican nationals, the large country right on our southern border—Mexico is not driving the numbers either. Only 19 percent of the border encounters in December were Mexican nationals.

So where are all these men and women and children coming from? Well, you can take a global map, a map of the world, and you can take a dart and throw the dart at the map and you are likely to hit a place where these migrants are coming from. Last year, across the entire border, Customs and Border Protection encountered migrants from 174 different countries. People from every corner of the globe are traveling through Mexico and crossing America's southern border.

There is no question that the conditions in Mexico and the Northern Triangle are contributing, but they are only a small fraction of the problem. People around the world see the Biden administration catching and releasing migrants by the thousands on a daily basis. They see the yearslong wait for asylum cases to be adjudicated. They see the lack of any interior enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and as they look at this picture, they realize that if they can make it across the southern border, they are likely to be able to stay in the United States for years, if not a lifetime.

Despite what the administration may think, this is not just a regional problem; it is a global phenomenon, run by transnational criminal organizations. That ought to concern all of us.

Last year, CBP encountered migrants from 174 different countries. If the administration wants to fix the “root

causes" of this crisis, are they going to fix the world? You can see why their misconception, their misunderstanding, their erroneous narrative of what the problem is doesn't help solve the problem.

It is time for the Biden administration to acknowledge the reality of the situation and look at solutions that are realistic and effective. In order to get this crisis under control, we have to move quickly on a bipartisan basis to insist on the enforcement of our immigration laws when people attempt to enter our country other than through legal means. That is the only viable path forward, and the sooner the administration understands that, the better off we will all be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Nebraska.

### BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I would thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Texas, for his comments and his perspective and his insight, as a Senator serving from a border State, on what they are facing every single day. I would say to my colleague that Nebraska has become a border State. I know Colorado has become a border State. Every State in this country now is feeling the effects of the chaos that we see at our southern border, so my thanks to the senior Senator from Texas for offering his perspective on that.

I would say that on January 13 in Nebraska, we had two Nebraska State Patrol officers who pulled over two separate vehicles that were hours away from each other. One car contained 50,000 suspected fentanyl pills. The other contained a suspected fentanyl-cocaine mixture. Both cars were driven up from the border. These are only the latest instances of synthetic opioid trafficking in my State of Nebraska. In 2022, the Nebraska State Patrol confiscated 66 pounds of fentanyl, and that is up from 25 pounds the year before and 10 pounds in 2020.

In Nebraska and throughout this Nation, the numbers of drug seizures are staggering. At the southwest border, there was a 55-percent increase in fentanyl seizures from just November to December. Heroin seizures increased by 52 percent the month before. Methamphetamine seizures increased as well.

We know what is driving these drug trafficking numbers: We have a crisis at our southern border. The effects of that crisis are rippling across the country, felt by communities in Nebraska and beyond.

When we cannot control who is entering the United States, what they are bringing in, or where they are going, that is a serious national security risk.

Let's go over the numbers. Customs and Border Protection encountered 2.3 million migrants at the southern bor-

der this past fiscal year—more encounters than any other year in our history. Migrant encounters in December reached the highest monthly level ever recorded, with over 250,000 encounters in 1 month. That number had tripled in just 2 years. And it gets even worse. Border Patrol agents have stopped individuals on the government's terror watch list 38 times so far since October. Suspected terrorist encounters will hit record levels if this trend continues through 2023. Gang-affiliated encounters skyrocketed last year as well, from 348 to 751.

These historic statistics should concern anyone who cares about our country's security and the safety of our communities and the safety of American families. But this administration doesn't consider what is going on at the border to be a crisis. In fact, our President hardly seems to consider what is going on at the border at all. Despite his recent trip south for what I thought was a photo op, his administration has exacerbated the border crisis.

In case anybody has forgotten, let me refresh your memories. With simple strokes of his pen, President Biden ended the national emergency declaration at the border. He halted construction on the border wall, and he scaled back ICE enforcement in the first few months of his Presidency.

No amount of photo ops can change what we all know: This administration has not only failed to prioritize the safety and security of our border, it has put forward policies over the past 2 years that have worsened this crisis.

Only a month ago, President Biden himself insisted that "there are more important things going on." I happen to think the national security threat posed by an influx of suspected terrorists across the border is important. I think that human trafficking overrunning our border is important. I think the massive increase in overdoses due to drug smuggling across the border is important. Across the country, fentanyl is now the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 49. Between 2019 and 2021, Nebraska's largest county saw an appalling 400-percent increase in fentanyl overdose deaths.

Complacency is not an acceptable response to this atrocious uptick in loss of life. My Republican colleagues and I have real, commonsense solutions to the problems that our border is facing. We need to invest more in new border security measures and resources for the men and women who serve us honorably as Border Patrol agents. We need to end the lenient policies like catch-and-release and increase penalties for people who don't show up for their immigration court hearings. We need the Department of Homeland Security to create a serious, comprehensive strategy to address those issues.

Simply throwing more tax dollars toward a smartphone app that offers migrants appointments to cross our bor-

der—well, that is what the Biden administration has proposed. It is not the right response to the mayhem we are seeing. Their policies do nothing to secure the border and to reinforce our Nation's security.

Until President Biden and my Democratic colleagues seriously work with us to fix this border chaos once and for all, we can expect to see more drugs brought into our country, more women and children facing a life of sex trafficking, and more threats to the security of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

### BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today at the beginning of this new year to talk about a problem we have talked about a lot, but unfortunately we haven't gotten the results we need, and that is to talk about our southern border.

It is not a new topic for me—I have been on the floor many times talking about this, as have my colleagues—and it is not a new topic for the American people because they see this every day, and many people are living it very close-up. Many of my colleagues can say the same because this is a topic they have unfortunately had to discuss over and over and over again, with no real results, and we are going to hear from some of them today.

Years ago on this Senate floor, I said:

I urge my colleagues here in the Senate to take a long—hard look at the undisputed facts that demonstrate the crisis at the border is escalating.

When I said those words, it was December 2018. The number of apprehensions along the southern border then was a little more than 60,000. Over the weekend, Customs and Border Protection released the numbers for this past December, and apprehensions along our southern border were reported at 251,487—an alltime high.

You can see from the chart I have here—you might not be able to read the numbers, but the dark blue is what we have been doing all through 2022, far eclipsing the light blue of 2021, which